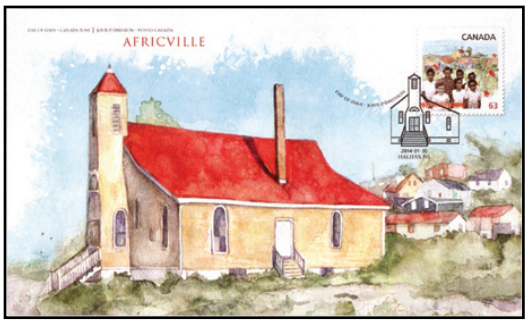
African-Canadian Communities Honored



In one of the more unusual Black History Month issues from the U.S. or Canada, on January 30 Canada Post released its annual Black History set—but this year instead of selecting individuals, the stamps honor African-Canadian communities.

Halifax's Africville is one of the two African-Canadian communities featured as part of Canada Post's celebration of Black History Month in 2014. Tragically, this historic community was dismantled through a relocation of its residents in the 1960s.

The Africville stamp features a photograph of seven young girls, all members of the community, set against an illustrated background of the neighbourhood's hills and homes.

The Official First Day Cover offers a glimpse of historic Africville through an illustration of a church that for so long was the social hub of the community. "We wanted to call attention to these buildings because they were at the heart of their neighborhoods," says Halifax stamp designer Karen Smith, "and they still hold a special place in the memories of many past residents."

Hogan's Alley in Vancouver's Strathcona neighborhood was an African-Canadian community that became a vibrant destination for food and jazz until it was removed in the 1960s to make way for new construction. Pairing real photographs with photo-inspired illustrations helped Smith draw together the physical legacy and the memories of a neighborhood. "The community had a real sense of pride. We wanted to honor that by showing the real people who lived there," explains Smith. "We used watercolor illustrations to bring a sense of nostalgia to the backgrounds, to represent the fond memories and feelings past residents had for their communities."

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